

Act No. 201 (S.237). Crimes and criminal procedures;, court procedure

An act relating to civil forfeiture proceedings in cases of animal cruelty

This act clarifies existing law and provides greater detail regarding the rules and process for civil forfeiture proceedings in cases of abused or neglected animals. The act permits parties to use witness affidavits in lieu of personal appearance in the proceedings provided that the witnesses are available via telephone during the hearing and authorizes the Restitution Unit of the Center for Crime Victim Services to collect funds owed by the defendant on behalf of the custodial caregiver of the animals. Veterinarians who provide necessary medical care to animals that are the subject of an abuse or neglect case are provided with limited civil immunity.

The act also requires the Commissioner of Corrections to examine the feasibility of beginning an animal training or adoption program in Vermont and, specifically, a program that would permit qualified offenders to care for animals that have been relinquished or seized pursuant to a cruelty or neglect investigation. The Commissioner shall report his or her recommendations to the Joint Committee on Corrections Oversight on or before November 1, 2014.

Effective Date: July 1, 2014